

# **California Nonpoint Source Tracking and Monitoring Council**

## **February 2005**

### **CHARTER**

#### **Mission**

To help improve implementation tracking and water quality monitoring to enhance local, state, federal, tribal and private efforts to address nonpoint source pollution and protect designated uses.

#### **Description**

The Council will focus on addressing the implementation tracking and water quality monitoring needs associated with the California Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program. The Council's efforts will be designed to enhance information needed for implementation at many levels (e.g., from local watershed organizations to state and federal agencies and the private sector) and among various programs. The activities of the Council will be coordinated with the Water Boards' Surface Water Assessment and Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) and other related efforts. The SWRCB and CCC are forming the Council, in cooperation with U.S. EPA, as a subcommittee of the State's NPS Interagency Coordinating Committee, and will provide staff support.

#### **Scope**

The Council will address the biological, chemical, physical and ecosystem aspects of tracking and monitoring, including surface and ground waters, freshwaters, estuarine, and marine environments in California. Therefore, the Council will encourage comprehensive, watershed-based, and cross-programmatic monitoring.

#### **Members**

Representatives from local, state, tribal and federal agencies, watershed groups, universities, and the private sector are welcome to participate on the Council. Meetings will be open, informal and consensus driven with votes taken, only as needed, with one vote per organization. It is anticipated that the Council will eventually identify co-chairs and an executive committee.

#### **Need for Council**

Monitoring indicates that nonpoint pollution is the leading cause of water quality impairments. However, numerous entities have identified the need and importance for continued work toward coordinating and improving water quality monitoring. Congress, the State Legislature and others are increasingly emphasizing the need to tie assessments of our NPS programs and corresponding public expenditures to improvements in water quality. Since 1990, CWA Section 319 has provided over \$90 million to the CA NPS Program and state bonds are now investing \$100's of millions more. Several NPS related programs (TMDLs, Conditional Waivers for

Irrigated Agriculture, water bonds, CWA Section 319, etc.) have tracking and monitoring requirements and it is important to coordinate with these efforts. Improved monitoring is essential to identify NPS sources, provide a further understanding of their impacts, guide control efforts and ultimately prove the value of the controls.

## **Goals**

- Enhance coordination, communication and collaboration among various tracking and monitoring programs for data collection, data management, data sharing and assessment.
- Provide consistent and scientifically defensible water quality monitoring data.
- Maintain an effective, performance-based approach to making decisions regarding investment of resources to reduce or prevent NPS pollution in California.
- Document the extent and effectiveness of NPS implementation, and ultimately the value of implementation for the preservation of designated uses and water quality.
- Foster goal-oriented monitoring that supports watershed management.
- Strengthen project monitoring (e.g., bond & 319 funded “on-the ground” projects).
- Help establish and carry-out a state monitoring strategy.
- Establish mechanisms to correlate land use activities and water quality.
- Support and encourage the utilization of new monitoring and assessment methods and techniques, as appropriate (e.g., probabilistic sampling, bioassessment, etc.).

## **Anticipated Activities**

- Inventory of existing monitoring, tracking, and assessment programs.
- Review and comment on California’s NPS tracking and monitoring strategies, and SWAMPs long term water quality monitoring strategy.
- Establish and test methodologies to track NPS implementation.
- Help prepare a CA NPS Program annual report based on tracking and monitoring data – and is so doing, identify data gaps, and monitoring and assessment needs.
- Provide technical guidance to the California Monitoring and Assessment Program (CMAP).
- Sponsor water monitoring technical workshops.
- Integrate local and volunteer monitoring with state/regional programs.
- Enhance data management, exchange and compatibility.
- Coordinate use of environmental indicators.
- Leverage resources (e.g., joint projects).
- Advocate NPS monitoring needs at various levels.

## **Annual Council Performance Review**

On an annual basis the Council will review its performance to confirm the need to continue, and determine future activities and direction. This review will include consideration of whether the Council would benefit by expanding its mission beyond nonpoint source pollution.